Defending the Work

11/7/2026

"No leader is exempt from criticism, and his humility will nowhere be seen more clearly than in the manner in which he accepts and reacts to it."
– J. Oswald Sanders

2 Corinthians 4:7-10

A. BRING IT ON

Nehemiah 4:1-5
Romans 12:17
Proverbs 15:1

Discouragement weighs heavily on us, robbing us of motivation, hindering our work, and diminishing life's joys. Its sources are diverse, ranging from general dissatisfaction, criticism, and unmet expectations to painful relationships, ongoing trials, declining health, and hopelessness about the future.

When we face discouragement, our first response should be to turn to our heavenly Father. However, our prayers should prioritize Him over our problems. After confessing our sins and shifting our perspective to acknowledge God's greatness and care, we can then trust Him to answer our petitions in His perfect timing.

B. THE WORK CONTINUES

Nehemiah 4:6-12

The sequence of the satanic attack is almost predictable. We see ridicule from the enemy. They mock us and harass us for being Christians. The closer we walk with God, the more intense their attacks become. Then they will change their tactics to frontal attack or persecution against us and our beliefs. It will be followed by discouragement. This probably is the most effective weapon against any Christian because it starts from within our hearts.

C. PRAY AND WORK

Nehemiah 4:13-23

Prayer should not replace responsible action. God DOES expect us to do what is right and necessary while we trust Him with all our hearts.

One note of caution: We can do all we want in common sense, but if we don't put God first, we have nothing. *Psalm 127:1*

During times of discouragement, all of us need to refocus our attention on the Lord. We can do this by meditating on His promises, memorizing His Word, and reflecting on His character. *Psalm 46:10*

Staying close with fellow believers matters because they are your battle buddies. We can pray for one another, care for one another, and show one another God's love. The pastor cannot take care of everyone; the elders or deacons cannot, either. Caring for one another is everybody's job.

Psalm 42:11 "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God." NIV

Recognize that this is not merely a situational problem, but a spiritual one. Turn to God's Word to understand what He desires to accomplish in your life through disap-

pointment and pain. Observe how He used hardships in the lives of biblical figures like Joseph and David. Then, recall His past faithfulness to you.

D. APPLICATIONS

1) The outside enemy is easily detected, but the enemy within is hard to find.

2) His promises are true and practical. And our God keeps His promises.

3) Our enemies are looking for the weakest link in our hearts.

4) Spiritual warfare is not 9 to 5, nor is it just 5 days a week. It is 24/7.

5) As Nehemiah didn't act upon his own strength but depended on God in prayer, we need to bring all of our burdens to Him.